From:	Daniel Cohen
To:	Christopher Williams
Subject:	RE: Formal Inquiry: Transparency Discrepancies and Policy Execution for ALPR Technology
Date:	Monday, February 23, 2026 10:01:36 AM
Attachments:	RE Formal Inquiry Transparency Discrepancies and Policy Execution for ALPR Technology.msg image003.png image004.png image005.png image006.png

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Chief –

This has been handled. Please see the attached email chain.

Dan

Daniel Cohen
Division Commander
Santa Maria Police Department
(805)-928-3781 ext. 1234

From: Christopher Williams <cwilliams@cityofsantamaria.org>
Sent: Sunday, February 22, 2026 11:11 AM
To: Daniel Cohen <dcohen@cityofsantamaria.org>
Subject: Re: Formal Inquiry: Transparency Discrepancies and Policy Execution for ALPR Technology

Any update on this? I want to give the CM an update.

Get Outlook for iOS

From: Christopher Williams
Sent: Tuesday, February 17, 2026 3:14:42 PM
To: Daniel Cohen <dcohen@cityofsantamaria.org>
Subject: FW: Formal Inquiry: Transparency Discrepancies and Policy Execution for ALPR Technology

Can we meet briefly to discuss Ian's concerns?

Christopher Williams
Police Chief
Santa Maria Police Department
(805)-928-3781 ext. 2295
(805) 207-7234 (cell)

From: David Rowlands
<drowlands@cityofsantamaria.org>
Sent: Tuesday, February 17, 2026 3:13 PM
To: Christopher Williams
<cwilliams@cityofsantamaria.org>

Cc: Thomas Watson <twatson@cityofsantamaria.org>
Subject: FW: Formal Inquiry: Transparency Discrepancies and Policy Execution for ALPR Technology

Chris

FYI

David W. Rowlands
City Manager
110 East Cook Street
Santa Maria, CA 93454
(805) 925-0951 ext. 2392

From: ianhowell94@gmail.com <ianhowell94@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 17, 2026 3:07 PM
To: Thomas Watson <twatson@cityofsantamaria.org>; David Rowlands <drowlands@cityofsantamaria.org>
Cc: Daniel Rios <drios@cityofsantamaria.org>; Web-City Clerk <clerkweb@cityofsantamaria.org>
Subject: Formal Inquiry: Transparency Discrepancies and Policy Execution for ALPR Technology

*** EXTERNAL EMAIL: Please use caution when opening links or attachments.***

Dear Mr. Watson and Mr. Rowlands,

I am writing as a resident of Santa Maria to follow up on a recent public records request regarding the Santa Maria Police Department's (SMPD) use of Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) technology. After reviewing the provided documents, I have identified three areas where I am seeking clarification to ensure our city's practices are consistent with state law and established city precedents.

1. Consistency in Public Notice (Operation Blue Watch Precedent)
The City has set a clear standard for public transparency through Operation Blue Watch, which uses prominent signage to notify the public of 24-hour video surveillance. However, the Flock ALPR system lacks similar physical notice despite tracking more sensitive data. Given that Policy 428.2.1(g) requires the Support Division Commander to ensure policies are "conspicuously posted," I am requesting that the City align Flock's public notice with the existing Blue Watch standard by posting physical signs at city boundaries.

2. Status of Unexecuted Inter-Agency Agreements
The records provided to me include an "Information Sharing Agreement" with the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office. While Sheriff Bill Brown signed this document in March 2023, the signature lines for the Santa Maria Chief of Police, City Attorney, and Risk Manager

are blank.

- Does a fully executed (signed) version of this agreement exist?
- If not, under what finalized legal framework is the SMPD currently sharing data with the County Sheriff?

3. Verification of Mandated Audits (Policy 428.5)

Under Policy 428.5 and California Civil Code § 1798.90.52, the Support Division Commander is responsible for maintaining an audit trail and ensuring regular internal audits are conducted.

- When was the last internal audit conducted to ensure that data shared with the CHP-or any other agency-has not been accessed by unauthorized out-of-state or federal entities?
- May I have a copy of the most recent summary of that audit as managed by Commander Rios?

I am seeking to ensure that as we adopt "subtle" surveillance tools, we maintain the "honesty and truth" that our community expects. I appreciate your time and your commitment to protecting both our safety and our privacy rights.

Sincerely,
Ian Howell